

Lloyd Garrison

Boston, July 8, 1870.

Thomas Bayley Potter, M. C.

Dear Sir - I fully appreciate the honor conferred upon me by the Cobden Club in placing me upon its list of members; and I very much regret that an interposing ocean will deprive me of the pleasure of giving my personal attendance at the Annual Dinner on the 23d inst.

Every such occasion must naturally elicit glowing eulogiums upon the labors and merits of the world-embracing statesman and philanthropist, whose lamented death gave occasion for the formation of the Club; but, while a heartfelt indulgence in these will be eminently proper, the occasion itself should be specially improved in support of those principles and furtherance of those measures which the exigencies of the times demand in regard not only to the welfare

and prosperity of the people of Great Britain, but also to the cause of universal liberty and peace.

A sincere recognition of the unity of mankind, and, consequently, of common inalienable rights and the same general interests, is essential to all just legislation, and fundamental in the science of political economy. The nation that seeks to build itself up at the expense of other nations will, in the end, find it a disastrous policy. The highest statesmanship is embodied in the Golden Rule, which is as morally binding upon millions acting in a governmental capacity, as it is upon an individual acting for himself. All class privileges must finally give place to popular distribution and possession; and the larger the representation of the masses, the greater will be the popular contentment, the more equitable the laws, and the stronger the government. For example: the political enfranchisement of so large an additional number,

by the passage of the last Reform Bill, was an act of parliamentary wisdom as well as of simple justice. But the time has come, both in Great Britain and the United States, for a fair and grave consideration of the ground on which men admit one another to the polls as electors. Is it not as unjust, as irrational, as injurious to the public welfare to exclude the women of the land from direct representation, on account of their sex or condition, as it would be to exclude the men? However dimly perceived or reluctantly conceded, the grand doctrine that all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed must more and more commend itself to the reason of mankind. To proscribe or load with disabilities any portion of the people because of natural and indispensable differences admits of no defence, and certainly is far from being creditable to the nineteenth century. What has sex, any more than the color of the skin, to do with the enjoyment of equal rights and privileges?

In this country the so-called protection policy, in the adjustment of the tariff, still controls the national legislation; but it is evidently losing ground through the growing conviction that the more unrestricted the industrial exchanges of the world, in respect to whatever is needed for human sustenance and comfort, the better for all nations. Free trade is as much a corollary of freedom as free speech, free inquiry, a free press and free institutions generally, and may be safely trusted. It is to the historical credit of Great Britain that, in this matter of free trade, she has led the way to an extent deserving alike the commendation and the imitation of the United States.

The many friends and admirers of Mr. Bright, in this country, feel much relieved in mind by the latest intelligence respecting the state of his health.

With the highest personal regards,  
Very truly yours,  
Wm. Lloyd Garrison.